

STATINTL

CPYRGHT **Senator Fulbright—Now and Then**

Rising to new heights of irresponsibility in his continuing attack on the United States presence in Viet Nam, Senator Fulbright now charges that "both literally and figuratively, Saigon has become an American brothel."

The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee bases his accusation on what are described as published reports. He does not say whether the published reports are true. Presumably he neither knows nor cares. It is enough if they serve as another club with which to belabor his government's policy of sending American troops to help resist the Communist aggression.

Of course, it may be that some Vietnamese have found it necessary to put their wives or daughters to work as bar girls "or to peddle them to American soldiers as mistresses." It may be that middle class Vietnamese families have difficulty renting homes from other Vietnamese because Americans have driven up the rent. But the senator certainly knows that this is not unusual in a country at war. In some respects it is a fact of life in a country which is not at war. One finds bar girls working in Washington, either from choice or economic necessity. Rents are high here, too, and the same may be true of some places in Arkansas.

But the senator would hardly say that Washington has become an American brothel. And without some more positive proof than published reports, he should not make the statement that Saigon has literally and figuratively become such a brothel.

He should not make such an irresponsible statement because his position in the Senate calls for at least a modicum of self-restraint. Senator Fulbright made this point himself in a report he issued last July after a November, 1964, visit to Yugoslavia. The essence of the report was reviewed in a letter to The Star on May 5 by Cyril A. Zebot, professor of economics at Georgetown University.

In that report, Senator Fulbright said statements by members of Congress have a greater capacity than most congressmen realize to disrupt American foreign policy in unconstructive and even unintended ways. It is entirely proper, the senator went on, for members of Congress to remind themselves of this, and to remember that "they are under an obligation to exercise voluntary self-restraint on delicate matters of foreign policy."

It is too bad that the Senator Fulbright of 1966 can't remember a word that was said by the Senator Fulbright of 1965.